

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 77

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE TRAFFIC SAFETY BUREAU OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION AND THE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND TO CONVENE
JOINTLY A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE RISK OF HYBRID AND OTHER
QUIET CARS TO THE BLIND AND OTHERS.

WHEREAS, vehicles such as hybrid or electric cars that are
designed to provide the desirable benefits of fuel efficiency
and low pollutants often use technologies other than gasoline-
powered engines; and

WHEREAS, use of these technologies can result in a car
that is much quieter than a gasoline-powered vehicle; and

WHEREAS, hybrid cars are so quiet when operating only with
their electric motors that blind people and other pedestrians,
equestrians and bicyclists may not be able to hear them; and

WHEREAS, preliminary findings of a research project

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1 conducted at the university of California show that hybrid cars
2 operating in electric mode must be forty percent closer to
3 pedestrians than combustion-engine vehicles before they can be
4 heard; and

5 WHEREAS, the potential danger of hybrid, electric or other
6 quiet cars is exacerbated in intersections and parking lots;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, not only the blind, but also other pedestrians
9 and children, runners, equestrians, bicyclists and the elderly
10 may be at greater risk due to quiet cars; and

11 WHEREAS, it can be projected that quiet technology and the
12 prevalence of hybrid, electric and other quiet cars will
13 increase significantly in years to come; and

14 WHEREAS, measures that take into account the multisensory
15 nature of traffic detection may be used to alert pedestrians,
16 and especially blind pedestrians, to the presence of quiet
17 cars;

18 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
19 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the traffic safety bureau of the
20 department of transportation and the commission for the blind
21 be requested to convene jointly a task force and provide the
22 necessary staff support to study the risk of hybrid and other
23 quiet cars to the blind and others; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force conveners be
25 requested to include on the task force, in addition to

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1 themselves, representatives from the motor vehicle division of
2 the taxation and revenue department, the aging and long-term
3 services department and the national federation of the blind of
4 New Mexico; an individual who is certified as an orientation
5 and mobility instructor of the blind; at least one person
6 representing the interests of the automotive manufacturing
7 industry; a representative of the New Mexico auto dealers
8 association; and other members as the task force conveners deem
9 appropriate; and

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force:

11 A. study:

12 (1) the effects of vehicle sound on pedestrian
13 safety; and

14 (2) the available technology that may enhance
15 the safety of blind pedestrians;

16 B. review all available research regarding the
17 effects of vehicle sound on pedestrian safety;

18 C. consult with consumer groups that represent
19 individuals who are blind and other pedestrians and bicyclists
20 and with advocates for the safety of children; and

21 D. conduct meetings to receive input from experts
22 on acoustics, automobile design, environmental quality,
23 orientation and mobility for blind people, pedestrian and
24 bicycle safety and other relevant fields and from interested
25 members of the public; and

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1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force identify and
2 evaluate barriers to implementation, necessary regulation and
3 the potential cost of implementing such measures; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
5 findings and recommendations to the interim legislative health
6 and human services committee by July 1, 2010; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
8 transmitted electronically to the governor; the chair of the
9 interim legislative health and human services committee; the
10 legislative council service; the secretaries of transportation,
11 taxation and revenue and aging and long-term services; the
12 president of the national federation of the blind of New
13 Mexico; the director of the New Mexico commission for the
14 blind; the president of the association of international
15 automobile manufacturers; the administrator of the national
16 highway traffic safety administration, the president of the
17 society of automotive engineers and the president of the
18 alliance of automobile manufacturers, who are studying the
19 issue of quiet cars; the New Mexico automotive dealers
20 association; and United States Representatives Edolphus Towns
21 and Cliff Stearns, sponsors of the Pedestrian Safety
22 Enhancement Act of 2009, H.R. 734, 111th Congress (2009-2010).